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"Thou shalt do no work," says the Bible. But you may, at Rome, if it be not servile. "It is a mortal sin to work for about two hours" (i.e., at servile work). Work, then, a minute less and you do not commit mortal sin; but if you are fortunate enough to be a scrivener, lawyer, attorney, teacher, you are not engaged in servile work, and therefore you may toil all Sunday (except mass time) as hard as you like, and you are keeping holy the Sabbath day! Teach dancing, singing, &c., and you keep a perpetual Sabbath. A mechanic might ask (if he dare), why is it a mortal sin to work two hours at gravelling an image, while his neighbour keeps holy the Sabbath in spending ten hours at drawing a picture?

There is no sin "in buying or selling, if there is any custom allowed by the bishop" p. 12. Holy Scripture (2 Esdras c. xiii., v. 15-17), in regard to sellers and buyers on the Sabbath, condemns them of "profaning the Sabbath day." The unscriptural distinction between servile and unservile works was not yet invented, nor did the high priest of that day know that he could dispense with the keeping the commandments of God!

"Thou shalt not steal." That circumstances of distress and the want of the necessities of life do not make stealing a Christian duty, or an act of indifference, is clear from Holy Scripture. In it we read, "Give me neither beggary nor riches: give me only the necessities of life; lest, being compelled by poverty, I should steal, and forswear the name of my God." While from the New Testament we learn, "He that stole, let him steal no more." No exception was taught by the Holy Ghost to those holy men whom He inspired; but a Redemptorist Father, sanctioned with the imprimatur of the Most Rev. Dr. Cullen, teaches that "steal no more" is not a Christian duty at all times; for "if a person was almost dying of hunger and took only what was necessary to save him," such stealing is not sin!—p. 20.

"It is a venial sin to steal a little: it is a mortal sin to steal much. For example, to steal from a workman a day's wages, or to steal less from a poorer man, or more from a richer man. (If you steal from different persons it needs half as much again for a mortal sin, and the same if you steal at different times; if you steal from different persons as well as at different times, it needs double the sum)" p. 20. If you steal a halfpenny less than the day's wages, you commit only a venial sin, you are in a state of grace still; if you stole that halfpenny then you would have lost your soul. But at another time in the day you may steal not only the halfpenny, but half as much as you stole before, and you are still in a state of grace; while you are a great gainer by thus dividing the thefts!

"It is a sin to mix something with what you sell—for example, water with any liquor—except there is a custom of doing it, or it is necessary in order to gain a reasonable profit."—p. 21.

The aptness of Irish scholars may be learned from an incident at K—rh Petty Sessions lately. A retailer, charged with having on transit to his house, without permit, more than a gallon of whiskey, proved in defence his purchase of only a gallon; but explained to the bench that, after purchase and payment, a few glasses of water were added at his request, that he might say to his customers, "I give it as I got it." He knew it was no sin to sell grog as whiskey, but he did not like others to possess his knowledge! He knew how to gain a reasonable profit!!

"Night Prayers." "Hail Mary" is among those things necessary to salvation which every Christian must know—p. 3. If we cannot enter heaven without knowing it now, neither could the Christians of the first four centuries. But Bishop Doyle puts the date of the existence of this prayer, as Roman Catholics now use it, so far beyond a doubt, that we learn from him that for about four hundred years after the Christian era the Church could not have used it. The Apostles went to heaven, and the martyrs and confessors—they knew it not! The modern Church of Rome says you must know it; the ancient Church of Rome did not say so—"When you are in bed (p. 35) say, *Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and soul*; and then, if you die in the night, how glad you will be if you have given your soul to Jesus." "In these three hearts (of Jesus, of Mary, and of Joseph) I put my trust"—p. 39. If a professing Christian offers the piecemeal gift of his soul to Jesus, a woman, and a man, in common—is it not to be feared that if he died in the night he would die in condemnation? "My son, give me thine heart," is the demand of Jesus; the Romanist response is, "Yea, Lord, I will divide it between thee and two creatures; for the Church teaches contrary to thy demand. I must obey her rather than God." Let the writer of the Short Catechism remember the words of God—"Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." "Blessed is he that trusteth (not in the Lord in conjunction with a woman and a man, but) in the Lord." He that perseveres to the end to trust in the Lord is pronounced "blessed" by the imprimatur of the Spirit of God; he that perseveres to the end to give his heart and soul to God and two creatures in common has the "imprimatur Paulus Cullen, Archiepiscopus Dublinensis."

I am, sir, your obedient servant, ENOCH HELI.

HOLY WELLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR,—I was much surprised some time ago to see a poor rheumatic woman on her knees at a holy well, as it is called, hoping, as I was told, to receive a cure after having duly performed certain devotions there. I had been under the impression that there was little resort now to such places, and that their character for sanctity and supernatural virtue had passed away.

Perhaps, Mr. Editor, some of your subscribers or readers might be able to give the public an account in your columns, if you would give insertion to their statements, of the holy wells, or other places of like character in their neighbourhoods; of the legends connected with them; the virtues for which they are famed; the cures or other remarkable benefits said to be derived from them, and the ceremonies or devotions practised at them.

I should hope it is unnecessary for me to suggest that in any such statements we should use the language of pity, and of the most tender pity, rather than that of scorn. If we know a surer and better way—that of trusting to the true fountain of living waters—let us praise Him who has made us to differ, and earnestly beseech Him to reclaim to Himself those who in ignorance hew out for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.—I am, sir, your obedient servant, Q. R. C.

ST. JOHN'S WELL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR,—As you have expressed a desire to know something about well-worship throughout the country, I think it right to tell you that St. John's well, within four miles of Kilkenny, is still resorted to on the Patrons day by numbers of sick and infirm persons, who bathe in it and drink the water. I happened to be there two years ago on the day before the Patron, or pattern day as it is called, when they were damming up the stream flowing from it, to make a ford for the next day; we saw fish there, and expressed our surprise that they did not attempt to catch them, which they could easily have done—"Is it eat holy fish?" was the reply. My companion rejoined—"Don't you drink the water to cure you, and surely if it is a sin to eat the holy fish, it must be an equal sin to drink the holy water?" This seemed to be a poser; for the men made no reply, but went on with their preparations.—Your obedient servant, AN EYE WITNESS.

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR,—I have been through almost every part of this kingdom, but such a place for superstition I have never beheld as this. If a man or a child, or any of the domestic animals, gets unwell, there is immediately a messenger dispatched for a bottle of water, from either the well of Carn, or the well of Farmon, or to some old woman or man for a charm (and there are few disorders for which they have not one), to cure the sick person; or a station to some of the holy wells promised; together with some of the most ridiculous and nonsensical recipes, and not all the same, but every person has one of his own. And though all such charms and superstitious practices are forbidden in their books of devotion, they are practised every day, and upon every occasion.

As to holy wells, they are visited for so many purposes that it would be impossible for me to enumerate them all. In the first place, they are visited to make atonement for sin; and sometimes they are enjoined by the priest by way of penance. Secondly—When a member of a family is suddenly taken ill, one of the family visits the well, to perform a station for the sick, or promises to do so at some future time. If they visit, they bring home, as I have already said, a bottle of the water, believing that it possesses the miraculous power of healing the sick person; and if the sick recovers, the cure is ascribed to the well—not to God. Some, when about to undertake any important business, promise a station at some of the wells for its success; and they are thus visited in almost every exigency. There is a well in the island of Innesglora from which no woman could take water, as it was said and believed that the water would instantly turn into maggots and corruption if a woman attempted to do so, and that it would remain in that state till again blessed by the priest. This, after my coming to B—Castle, I was determined to test, by bringing in my wife to lift the water, but was threatened with having my house burned over my head if I attempted it. Some time after, Captain N—came into this place, and hearing the tradition of the well, took his sister-in-law into the island, and she took the water pure, and the well remained the same.

As to charms, I would not be able to enumerate them in a week. There is not a disorder incident to the human race for which they have not a charm. The persons who have them (and they are many) say the charm will be of no force, unless the person making it is paid either more or less. They have charms for the teeth, eyes, worms, for the ague, king's evil; and, in short, for every disorder to which humanity is liable there is a peculiar charm, which is preserved by the person possessing it, in a bit of tow, a bottle of water, or some other substance, and given or sent by the person to the sick; and if it should please the

Lord to recover that person, the cure is ascribed to the charm. In the king's evil, in the place of the king's blood, which it is said cures that terrible disorder, some old women have the blood of twelve wrens in a little rag, and rub it to the part affected. This latter I have seen used, and was told by the person using it, that it was as effectual as the king's blood.

The popular belief in the miraculous effect of those charms is almost universal, even among those who should know better, and it would be in vain to contend with the people on that point. They have also thousands of old wives fables, that it would be impossible to enumerate, one of which I beg leave to relate. I was one day on a visit, speaking to a number of persons assembled, when I happened to mention the twelve Apostles, an old woman present asked if I knew how the twelve Apostles came; I answered that they were called by the Lord Jesus Christ, one after the other; she told me I knew nothing of the matter, but she could tell me, and then related the following story:—When the Virgin and her Son were begging, they came to lodge in a certain house, and were treated well by the man and his wife; in the morning when they were leaving the virgin asked her son to do something for them, for their kindness. He said that their son would fall from a precipice; she remonstrated, but he continued firm. It happened as he said; their only son fell down a precipice, and his bones were broken to pieces. The poor disconsolate mother ran and picked up one of her son's bones, ground it to powder, put it into a little box, and said she would keep it as a memorial of him during her life. On her way along the precipice she came to a cave in the rock inhabited by twelve nuns, of whom one was standing at the door of the cave, who asked what she had in the box; she told her, and she called the rest of the nuns to see the box. One of them asked her to taste the powder; she said she would not unless they would all taste it; they all agreed to do so, and the whole twelve in due time brought forth the twelve Apostles.

There is in the island of Inniskea a stone they call the Neevoe (or young, or little saint), which I am almost certain is now depended on in some cases more than God himself. This stone has been on the island time immemorial, and is almost, if not altogether, worshipped by the people. As to the time it came there, or by whom brought, I know not; but some time ago, some captain of a ship who landed on the island took and broke it in pieces on the beach; after his departure, the islanders gathered up the pieces, bound them together with cloth, and put a new suit of clothes upon it every year. It is said that many miracles are performed by this stone. When the wind is unfavourable for the islanders for fishing, the Neevoe is placed in a certain position on the shore, and in twenty-four hours the wind becomes favourable. All this is learned from the islanders themselves.

Your obedient servant,

A READER.

Erris.

WHICH ARE THE PRIESTS OR THE BIBLE THE STRONGER?

MR. EDITOR,—After mass last Sunday some of us were opposite the Protestant church, as the people came out, and we seen that most of them had two books in their hands. We knew that one was their book of prayers, but we couldn't tell what the second was. After a while the Reader came out, and as he had the two books like the rest, we asked him what the second one was. "It's the Bible," says he. "What a power of Bibles you must have," says Mick, "for even the childer have them." "Every man, woman, and child that wishes can have one," says the Reader; "for, if there's any one too poor to buy it the Minister gets it for him free of expense, and our clergy are ever and always urging the people to get Bibles and bring them to church, for they're not afraid to have the doctrines they preach tried by that book." "That must be true anyhow," says Mick; "for if they preached contrary to the Bible, they wouldn't be so eager to give them to you." "But," says the Reader, "I seen over a thousand of you going to chapel this morning, and not one of you had a Bible. Some had the 'Path to Paradise,' others had the 'Garden of the Soul,' and more the 'Key of Heaven'; but tell me why not one amongst you had a Bible?" "Sure, yourself knows right well," says Mick, "that we daren't be seen with a Bible in our hands; any of us that have them keep them snug under the thatch, but there's little chance of our bringing them to chapel." "It's a shame for you," says Andy Kelly, "to be talking that way of your clergy; sure they have authority from the Word of God for what they do." "Stop a while," says the Reader: "do your priests say that it's from the Bible they get their authority?" "To be sure," says Andy; "where else would they get it?" "Well," says the Reader, "if so be that the Bible does give them that authority, what harm would it do to let the people look at it?" "Why," says Andy, "they wouldn't understand it, so the priests think it better to explain it to them." "May I never sin," says Jerry, "but them's the very words of that old limb of an attorney, when he was robbing Darby Crowley's daughters. Poor Darby died in the year of the famine, and his three girls were left by themselves; for the boys had gone to America, so they went to the attorney, and asked about